



**Missing and Murdered African American Women Task Force  
May 27, 2022 - 9 am - 1 pm Meeting Agenda**

**Attendance:**

In person: Lakeisha Lee , Dr Brittany Lewis, Ayize, Robert Smalls, Rebecca Rabb, Artika Roller

Virtual: Senator Mary Kunesch, Representative Lisa Demuth, Representative Ruth Richardson, Senator Bruce Anderson, Beatriz Menanteau, Evan Gilead, Lisa Clemons, Liv Reyes

- I. Welcome and Opening - 9-9:50 - Chair Lee and Co -Chair Dr. Mitchell**
  - A. Task Force Member Introductions
  - B. Approval of March 25, 2022 Minutes of Meeting

No quorum to approve minutes

- C. Approval of May 27, 2022, Meeting Agenda
- D. Public Comment

Lakeisha: starts meeting, sad not more members in person  
Task force member introductions  
No quorum to approve minutes  
No public comment  
[skip break]

**II. Break 9:50-10**

**III. General Updates - 10-10:15 - Chair Lee, Co -Chair Dr. Mitchell, and RIA**

- A. Legislative
- B. MMAAW Twin Cities March
- C. Fundraising
- D. United Nations Committee to Eliminate Racial Discrimination Review

Richardson: legislative update –short public safety update due to no public safety meeting this week/month?

Lakeisha: first MMAAW march meeting 4 people, met with women's foundation to discuss trip to DC (advisory board) Black femicide march 8/27. Also sent RIA narrative sent to UN committee to eliminate racial discrimination



Liv: if folks want to see outcomes, have to confirm with org if shareable to the task force, advocates from human rights took background info and presented questions in report format , thanks to task force, questions?

Anderson: copies available?

Liv: will send as pdf in coming weeks.

#### **IV. Advisory Council Updates 10:15-10:25 - RIA**

Liv: Advisory council updates: (april) recommendations on key informants, finalized scope –expansion to child welfare services at large, data collection tools, audience and core questions. (may) review data collection plan and timeline and finalize tools, interview training –important for members involved in the data collection processes. Clarification on funding: to join DC Black femicide march asking task force members to participate in data collection processes. Open for questions about the council space

Dr Lewis: adding hope that tf and ac are seeing attention to transparency about strategies and inclusion of members in the process. Importance of relationships that RIA has to partners in data collection as well as the participation of ac members in the collection of data and relationships with Black women and girls. Collaboration is working group fashion intentional participation in the engagement and data collection process

Liv: first sharing out of data collection. Showing where previous conversations have brought us, timeline. Buckets of data collection (walkthrough). Root causes from male perspective → 2 focus groups. Response to violence and MMAAW –barriers in response to MMAAW and supports that should be raised or created. Focus groups: safe harbor, emphasis on police depts without missing person units. Interviews. Systems that historically police and harm Black women and girls: focus groups on welfare programs and robust interviews with Black women and girls experience violence. Open to comment

Lakeisha: ask for comments on focus groups and interviews –anyone missing?

Liv: clarification on service providers for example, offering additional context (i.e. domestic violence, Black transgender)



Richardson: raising discussion of foster care system, additional nuances and intersections. In ed policy mdh and UMN created a report on impacts on schools and data on number of students receiving [] for substances, food, housing. Disparities on most impacted → safe harbor connection and exploitation pieces, important connection to education system and schools. System's piece we want to be able to dig into education and foster care systems. Especially people aging out of the foster care system, need to engage with them. Disability connection that she saw in her work before legislature → brain damage due to fetal alcohol syndrome, Cyntoia Brown and commonality of this experience. Importance of race disability intersection creating vulnerability that should be engaged by the work.

Liv: thanks and RIA looking into this report, raising the foster care system and race/disability. Strategy for incorporating into our work to prevent duplication, strengthened by including in research

Kunesh: affirmation of richardson. Background in education, teacher in North Mpls and then Robbinsdale, increased teachers of color, working in their own communities. Worked in predominantly african american school and mentored by Dolores Riley strengthened teaching. In the legislature informed by serving communities they don't represent, good legislation to increase Black teachers, BIPOC teachers, robust programs. Importance of this legislation and ask for incorporation of this data

Anderson: asking to include parents, religious leaders. These have important role in women and girls lives and will round out

Liv: parents are represented in the collection space, and will provide a way to show this graphically. Member of a men's group that offered connection to religious and other community leaders to engage. Raising richardson's nexus w disability, teachers, boil down to demographics → any demographics missing/what would you like us to collect? age/race/gender/ability

Kunesh: homeownership, do you own home, generational homeownership. We know it's the first step to generational wealth, covenants and barriers against BIPOC homeownership. Something about homeownership and maybe "have you ever had a financial literacy course?" "wealth management acknowledgement base"

Lewis: great suggestions, want conversation offline w/ liv and lakeisha about having focus group w parents and families of people who have lost Black woman or girl. Specifics about experience, support etc. Religious communities: ask in demographic



surveys, easy questions about disability, faith, foster care, ebt, health/chronic illness. Important to get a sense of the intersections of participants. Who are being engaged and what do they bring with them? Ask liv how to ask people for criminal justice system experience without being intrusive

Liv: -justice impacted - victim of crime, experienced detainment, allow people to answer as they'd like, could also be family of impacted by incarceration/detainment. Hello to Artika. Raising questions about the voice of mothers. Importance of root cause discussion with mothers, all encompassing. Framing of literature for root cause section informed heavily by mothers

Beatriz: apologies in case missed -connection exploitation and schools. Chewi ng on connection with education as a space where can be helpful prevention access to youth. Cases with abuse, by the time noted by authorities, were so severe because missing prevention as a possible safety net from . MN student survey undercounting bc missing youth not in school to fill out survey, often youth most impacted/vulnerable that miss school. Keeping kids in school to access resources. In education -keeping youth in school system and prevention at this point -raising this point

Richardson: appreciate these points. Data on what happens in early childhood that puts children on trajectories. Prek to 3rd: 1 suspension → 2x likely to involve in criminal justice system 10x not graduated hs, significant ramifications and consequences for. Mn is the worst for suspensions for Black, Indigenous, and students with disability. Greater disparities for intersecting identities-data from mdhr about disparities, Black students pushed out of school for specific behaviors. Beatriz raises the vulnerability of students not in the classroom . For kids past 3rd grade real implications for students in trajectories-risk and challenges these students face

Liv: council underscoring the importance of education and har. Want to connect to staff in the education system , identifying and receiving insights to school environments and support for Black girls.

Lakeisha: brought this up specifically in jam boards and discussions. Truancy court for parents late and absences, contact to family and connection to the court system and impacts on families. Glad to have this intersection brought

Liv: impact of covid on this from chat Lisa



Beatriz: emphasis on girls and boys in schools

Artika: hello to group, and MNCASa work to eradicate sexual violence uplifting Black women and girls, taking in information and finding opportunity to respond

**V. Data Collection and Timeline** 10:25-10:45 - RIA

Liv: timeline and followup with different items, lessons learned and changes to timeline: initially planned to complete collection by July for data walk in August. Data walk opportunity to share with community, networks of participants in collection, and committee members—chance to ask what you see as important and what's missing. Covid permitting physical space to talk about data in person. Liv discusses the new timeline as on slides: highlights—every mtg opportunity to look at data, wrap up collection by August, will send out updated materials and timeline/data walk. Questions?

Intentionality about outreach strategy: how to collect data, want diverse groups of Black women and girls about experiences of violence interpersonal institutional. Going further violence we mean. Systems mean...Inclusive in our definition of violence to systems. Zen bin conversation and partnership. Events. Privacy and reiki practice. Partnerships with m n orgs, one offs or regular events, open to questions and comments. Seeing none

**VI. Preliminary Key Informant Data** 10:45-11:00 - RIA

Liv: sharing from interviews, breakout rooms and small groups: begun key informants: describing venn diagram. Demographic data. Questions about their work and Black women and girls and how they can better support. Missing policies and practices (worker in trafficking space, shut down website used to traffic women and girls – FOSTA shut down website, connections with law enforcement backpages “lost connection for law enforcement”

Artika: heard this comment, 5 years since shutting down, moving away from this toward what can be done, feels like a crutch that they have one less tool, no indication that this would still be a viable tool for law enforcement

Liv: one person's perspective opening up to nuanced perspectives and can be raised in report if continues to come up in data collection



Challenges directly impacting Black women/girls: emph on trafficking court and interactions between traffickers and victim in court, emph on data availability and transparency (i.e. hospital data) work stops at publication of statistics, data is inaccessible and unavailable

Partnerships lead to success, connection to resources (i.e interviews with victims), no arrest for prostitution –victim assistance, upstream work: data and programming and investigations for prevention

Recommendations: funding for capacity, investments, relationship of work to crime, target systemically

Beatriz: clarification of codified and not codified post its, no prosecution of youth for prostitution, arrests for people bought and sold in prostitution, clarification and nuance in the “do not decriminalization of prostitution” what that means, adult level, attention to adult level, don’t want to get into the weeds on this asking for clarification about this perspective of interviewee

Liv: asked for clarification with the interviewee, their perspective is accountability held for people selling sex, detainment and arrests allows them to connected to resources

Dr Lewis: appreciate liv including this from interviewee, raising connection to lived experience of needing to have something wrong with them to get help (criminalized to get help)

Artika: method of coercion to testification or participation deposition at the threat of criminalization despite supposed victimhood to get testimony

Liv: complication and nuance and importance of digging into this nuance more in conversation to pursue further or remove it (breakout room question 3). Also could request more info on this from RIA

Dr Lewis: triangulation for interviewee, council member lived experience to discuss tension and interest. Recommendation is real with law enforcement staff and person with lived experience, what does it mean to present this tension as a recommendation

Artika: centering to discuss victims and survivors rather than perpetrators



Dr. Lewis: presenting questions about victims and survivors and noticing that these individuals only want to frame around criminalization of victims

Liv: these recommendations did not center Black women and girls specifically, but recommendations from these professions did not consider intersections, unnatural to do this centering in the interviews. All we can talk about is perpetrators, interviewees couldn't describe this

Dr. Lewis : in RIA pulling out memos from interviews. When individuals talk about specific topics the use body language and keywords in the interview that we observe, we pick up on this and put into the memos because the work is to change the culture [add more here ]

## **VII. Data Discussion - Breakout Groups 11:00-11:20- RIA and Chair Lee**

Lakeisha:

Bob Smalls: surprised by the extensive discussion of prosecutors and diversity activity w/ county attorneys to diversify, diversity of hennepin and ramsey – like to know more, trauma -informed, big push from organization to do this work are we failing?

Lewis: perception vs reality of the effect of diversity on these problems and what does diversity provide prosecution

Bob: good points raising, more people in law enforcement, trouble filling positions in county prosecutors offices, lack of staff why and how?

Lewis: trauma informed training: standards and expectations???

Artika: articles about trauma informed or race equity training are not the answer, same experience in the nonprofit world, question of how race equity is implemented in organizations and institutional systems supporting race equity . as statewide network thinking of bemidji and work across many counties, diversification of greater mn – st cloud stillwater rochester, Black communities - ados and african immigrants, transition in mn away from metro area only discussions. 5 generation African American communities in winona. Difficulties seeking justice in the greater mn

Lakeisha: importance of the culture here, her own work on the ground. I.e. calling youth prostitutes, culture affects work moving forward, systems are against culture change, social media, parenting youth with technology, misconception b/w gov systems and people with lived experiences, families. Barriers to entry for young people to nationwide processes and systems. Institutions are unwilling to engage youth through the media that they actually use (i.e. social media) Black teachers barriers for Black women to enter the education system. Barriers expectations and unknowns in the culture

Dr Lewis: raising that 1 work should be engaging to responsive and grounded in youth, 2 diversity needs are inconsistent with the reality of people.

Lakeisha: for example mba and that she can offer so much more than just that qualification that is barrier

Dr Lewis: recruitment and intentionality and barriers in “diversity”. Interviewees raise that their work has little to no structuring of prevention – shift to focus on the politics of prevention away from band aids

Artika: agreement, even through recruitment lack of support to retain these people (i.e. prosecutors). Ideals of this person to support their communities are in conflict with standards set for this person. Person may need many more resources to succeed. Advocates have an easier time working with people they provide service to than their colleagues. Prevention: funding from govt. I.e. funding contingent on following cdc guidelines but as Black people we know how to fill in the gaps and navigate. Sometimes these guidelines are so prescribed that the work can’t happen. Prevention: how do I do the work that I can when the funding may be restrictive

Lewis (for in person group):

- resonance and surprises: diversity: recruitment and retention challenged
- The word prevention: systems are not preventative but individuals are interested in prevention in their work, pull this apart and make recommendations
- Trauma informed: what does it mean? What supports exist to maintain trauma informed work, define that based on engagement of Black women and girls toward trauma informed work
- youth : engaged and included in this work

Kunesh:

- Voice of the community – victims and survivors engaged in this process





- Black cultures – many lenses and distinct experiences, languages, distinct perspectives of the Black community

Menenteau: language and accessibility, plain language in writing, glossary to define, intentionality about transparent language and where discrepancies might appear

Alisa Clemons: public health lens and clarity on this phrase: cited MPLS putting racism as public health but not doing anything. Clarity on African American → can mean many different things, African Americans can only request funds through “POC”, but wider devaluation of African American as a category

Liv: lack of targeted programming for Black women and girls, don't know what we don't know, impact of responses by the experiences of these interviewees

Lewis: How do we get to know Black women and girls? We can use the meta data from interviews about how they do this work, talking about culture

Lakeisha: emphasis on youth, technology, media and shifts in culture and importance of engagement through these methodologies. Black teachers example and single parents → recruitment and retention

**VIII. Healing Break - 11:20-11:30 - Kamisha**

**IX. Interview Training 11:30-12:00 - RIA**

Lewis: A little behind, an abridged version of what we were supposed to do, invite folks to speak with here outside the meeting. Engaged research for relationships and partnerships, ethics as an organization to invite partners into the community to collect data. Training—what to do before getting consent, questions of what it means to be human before interview

- Defining Research based tools and terms, follow ups probes, etc.
- 1-1 interviews vs. focus groups what you're able to do and your role not being robotic
- Probing questions: trusting in interview guide and questions made for good engagement, your job is to make sure the questions are working for the interviewee, how to make them comfortable and ready to answer the questions as they want to
- Wants task force to know they are invited to be out in community in the work, not required but value of RIA, everyone in council wants to participate (council has lived experience in this space, but as experts and allies in the tf, they are encouraged to join in RIA) can reach out to liv/herself to get training and



calendly, consent, open to questions acknowledging that RIA model is very different from state task force processes, open to questions about model

Lakeisha: reiterating encouragement to participate and get trained, even if you feel experienced this is important to strengthen everyone's participation, this is the meat and potatoes

Lewis: invested in co-designing process with community because most existing data is devoid of context – the reason data is left on shelves is that it wasn't designed to be actionable. RIA is unique because unlike organizations that repurpose existing data, the recommendation highlighted that the data is not actionable, RIA brings in the expertise to make data actionable using actionable methods which can be a scary or new experience

Lakeisha: importance of this because this process is about working together in this and encouragement to participate and come back with context to enrich participation, especially when the task force meets with an advisory council. Excited to invite people in without hierarchies, etc

Liv: best experiences are with partners joining in the research and then being able to report back. Can just notetake or co-facilitate to make the process approachable, many ways to engage

## **X. How Can We Support Each Other? - Breakout Groups 12-12:20 - Chair Lee**

Lakeisha: one large group discussion, did not receive feedback on this but ready to talk about it together:

Lewis: Is it helpful to talk about support we might need or support we might give others? Support I need is understanding that meetings are quarterly, asking for meetings to be in person despite many not available today, asking for people to challenge themselves and lean into discomfort. Support I need in the shared work is collaboration through discomfort

Lakeisha: affirmation, and circling back to language, zoom awkwardness, always room for questions, looking for support through more communication, challenges with march, knows how to get to the media, but would like for folks in the field to be active in this, currently working with families and youth – making video right now with



someone who's very anxious to share to speak with group, ready to plug in anyone you might think is interested. Ask for more

Liv: more effort for public comment this meeting recognizing it's not always approachable, how to be more tactful in outreach? Not having people be a part of this is disheartening, looking for ways to engage more, want tf members to participate more, not I leave early

Artika: RIA and lakeisha are doing everything they can to be engaged, she needs to recenter and be committed to this work and create space, this work is meaningful to her and she needs to be still and do the work that comes with being on the tf, holiday weekend despite being at work. Appreciation for team and recognition that I have not engaged to the extent that she should

Lakeisha: reiterate how interesting it'll be to have the ac come into the space

Beatriz: public comment: not sure how to make this more of a space, different space/place/time?? Agreed it's an important space to have folks engaged with.

Liv: reiterate Lakeisha's point about people tf members know to participate, funneled inbox to offer via email comments – possibility of video to capture emotion without standing before tf.

Dr Lewis: this summer we can have more advertisements for public comment. Frustrated by the lack of interest and engagement with this work. Social media or website should be there/been there

Beatriz: like focused public comment space, tf space sounds so formal, daunting to share story, support community -based space/forum

Lakeisha: communication problems mercury retrograde experience not being on kmoj, thinking with Kamisha, what is our elevator speech about the tf to tell our community about this work?

Beatriz: should we make an elevator speech to give to others

Dr. Lewis: re Lakeisha video submission, folks in community that might be willing to have testimony recorded

Lakeisha: importance of tiktok, ready to record a tiktok



Dr. Lewis: how should make a tiktok, recording one minute with interviewees, making a social media presence, especially to engage folks with very limited time, get quick consent, social media presence

Rebecca: did share on dps social media page about the tf and open for engagement, issues with presence on dps. Tf website for awareness, anyone can share information

Lewis: distinction between awareness and tf (has to be a part of dps). Can we post about the tf

Rebecca: public information of the meetings

Lewis: support the creation of awareness social media pages

All: generation aspect for all platforms → linkedin, fb, twitter, tiktok, ig,

Kunesh: m m i w energy starting in canada, network established through social media for m m i w and activation for actions. For MMIW focus groups, I went into sites where folks could come in and speak. Webpage for people to call and leave messages, email, written testimony, red hand over mouth instant connection to MMIW, is there a logo for MMAAW??

Lewis: we have a data person can start working at this

Kunesh: KMOJ mentioned, we have native radio in stp, invited many to speak on fridays as a guest w her or a specific spot

Lakeisha: me and dr lewis can be on the show, connected by Dr. Mitchell to be on somali radio, frogtown radio station, please connect me to this kind of connection stations, etc. Shiloh and Campford biggest Black churches in Twin Cities getting connected and plugged into awareness

Kunesh: in native community connected with elders to make stump speeches for stories. Maybe connecting with Black elders to speak on or preach to these issues, including them in the participation with this work. Many native elders came down to testify to the legislature to tell their stories, important for elders to have their voice

Lakeisha: change in the Black community in the last generation is the conversation about Black family and youth → where's community. Different communities about



where people are where ppl feel safe. Trauma about church → a lot of youth don;t go because of being forced, a lot of difference from elders in the community to connect with central spiritual space. The African American community has a struggle in this regard. All of us here should think through how we can approach this,

Kunesh: church and organized religion is very sensitive because of forced conversions, native boarding schools, expressing understanding for this tension, distinctions about indigenous peoples being on ancestral lands

**XI. Lunch Break** 12:20-12:30

**XII. Revisit Report** 12:30-12:50 - RIA

Liv: lens and scope of research funneling of many sources

**XIII. Closing and next steps** - 12:50-1 - Chair Lee

A. July 29th, 9 - 1pm location TBD

Lakeisha: reminder that we will push for another in person meeting, social media, whatever we need as a team to do, wishing great weekend and celebrations.